

Message Text

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12

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CI, PINT, ELAB

SUBJECT: LABOR ASPECTS OF PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S MARCH 11 SPEECH

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 2008, (B) SANTIAGO 2014, (C) 75 SANTIAGO A-94,

1. PRESIDENT PINOCHET'S MARCH 11 ADDRESS (THE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF WHICH ARE COVERED IN REFTELS A AND B) SUGGESTED LITTLE DEPARTURE FROM LABOR POLICY WHICH GOC HAS FOLLOWED DURING PAST YEAR. IN ADDITION TO REGULAR QUARTERLY WAGE ADJUSTMENTS BASED ON OFFICIAL CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, WHICH HAD BEEN ANNOUNCED A FEW DAYS PREVIOUS, PINOCHET OUTLINED ONLY MODEST INCREASES IN MINIMUM LEVEL WAGES FOR ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYEES (REFTEL B).

2. OF GREATER CONCERN TO ORGANIZED LABOR WAS PRESIDENT'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF "POSTPONEMENT" OF PROMULGATION OF LONG AWAITED LABOR CODE. ALTHOUGH NO OFFICIAL DATE HAD BEEN SET, LABOR LEADERS HAD BEEN LED TO EXPECT THAT NEW LABOR CODE WOULD BE ENACTED ON MAY 1. SPEECH INDICATES THAT THAT WILL NOT BE THE CASE AND THAT CODE PROPOSALS ALONG WITH LABOR AND MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS WILL UNDERGO FURTHER GOC STUDY.

3. PINOCHET ALSO STATED THAT THE PRESENT "ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL EMERGENCY" WOULD NOT PERMIT RESTORATION OF UNION ELECTIONS OR

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COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, AND LEFT NO INDICATION AS TO WHEN THESE

BASIC UNION RIGHTS WILL BE PERMITTED.

4. COMMENT: DRAFT REVISIONS TO LABOR CODE AS ORIGINALLY PRESENTED TO LABOR FOR COMMENT IN MAY 1975 INDICATED THAT TRADITIONAL UNION RIGHTS WOULD NOT BE RESTORED BEFORE MARCH 1976, AND THEN DEPENDING ON ECONOMIC CONDITIONS -- I.E., STOPPING INFLATION (REF C). NO LABOR LEADER HAD SERIOUSLY EXPECTED RESTORATION OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING OR UNION ELECTIONS -- NOT TO SPEAK OF RIGHT TO STRIKE -- THIS MONTH, BUT PINOCHET'S ANNOUNCEMENT WAS NEVERTHELESS A BITTER PILL.

5. MOST UNION LEADERS HAD HARBORED SOME HOPE THAT PINOCHET WOULD OFFER MORE ECONOMIC RELIEF TO LOWEST WAGE EARNERS THAN HE DID.
POPPER

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